



UPDATE

December 2003

Volume 1, Issue 4

FIRST SERVICE GROUP NEWSLETTER

FIRST SERVICE GROUP CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

On February 1, 1964, Sam Gruber and Jim Goodwin formed a partnership called Goodwin and Gruber. The result of that partnership, now First Service Group, is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

In 1964 Sam was employed as the life and health insurance manager of the Pittsburgh branch office of the American Casualty Insurance Company. He had been there for eight years. Jim Goodwin was an agent for the same company and Sam worked with him on various accounts. They soon realized that they worked well together and felt it could be to their mutual advantage to form a partnership and offer mortgage life and accident & health insurance through lending institutions. This was the beginning of Goodwin and Gruber.

Their first location was at the Investment Building in downtown Pittsburgh. The company was started with Sam and his first employee, Dorothy Cavanaugh, who remained a dedicated employee with the company until her re-

tirement in the year 2000. (Jim Goodwin operated from his own agency located in Waynesburg until his death in 1985.) Sam remained at this location for six years and in 1970 relocated to the 300 Sixth Avenue Building. On August 26, 1974 Marilyn Ratermann joined the team as an office assistant and now serves as the office manager and corporate secretary. In July of 1976, Sam's son Jim joined the business after working at the Fireman's Fund as a claims representative and in January of 1982 his other son Tom came on board after serving as regional manager for Bell Federal Savings and Loan Association. Sam explained, "I was very fortunate to have both my sons join me in the business, along with Dave Karr who joined the company in September of 1991 after working as a regional manager for Aetna Life." Jim Gruber, Tom Gruber, and Dave Karr serve as vice-presidents of First Service Group. In 1979, a final relocation was made to the McKnight East offices

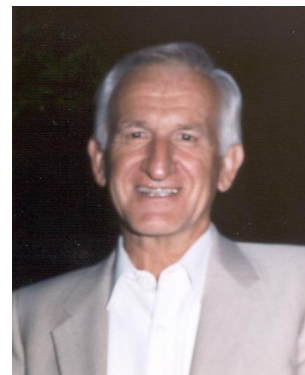


Sam Gruber (1963)

where the company is today.

In May of 1976, the company became incorporated, but it wasn't until 1988 that it became known as First Service Group. The Company has grown from three employees to thirteen and now offers a wide variety of insurance products and services.

When I asked Sam what he considered to be the key to his success, he simply stated, "It's important to maintain good business and employee relationships and always be above board in your business dealings. You should not make promises that you can't keep." He is proud of the fact that he still uses the same accounting and law firms



Sam Gruber (2003)

from when he started the business.

Congratulations to Sam in reaching this milestone and continued good luck.

- Terry Cole -

WINTERIZATION OF VACANT PROPERTIES

(IN REGARDS TO FORCE PLACE COVERAGE)

This information is being provided as we enter the winter season to alert you to the potential for damage to residential properties caused by freezing pipes.

Damage caused by freezing is covered if reasonable care has been taken to maintain heat or to shut off the water supply and to drain the system and appliances of water. The following are some suggested procedures:

1. Check property records now to make sure vacant properties are identified and winterized before the cold weather arrives.
2. If heat is maintained, make certain you have evidence that utilities were notified to send the bills to you. If oil or propane heat is used, arrange written contracts for automatic refill.
3. If heat is not maintained, perform the following:

Dry Heat Systems -
Thoroughly drain all

water piping and the hot water heater. Open all faucets and valves during the process and close after completion. Place adequate antifreeze in fixture traps including toilet bowls and tanks.

Wet Heat Systems - Follow procedures above. Also, drain the boiler system, opening the radiator vents during the process.

Radiant Heat Systems - Follow procedures above. Also drain the heater and heat piping and blow dry using compressed air. Adequate antifreeze should be put in radiant piping.

4. Make frequent visits, at least monthly, to make interior inspections and check conditions of any operating equipment.
5. **Keep written records** in a convenient place to show to the insurance company representative if there is a loss.



We are occasionally asked about reasonable care as limited by law prior to foreclosure. Similar to FHA requirements, mortgagees are expected to exercise the same level of diligence and prudence in protecting vacant property that would be provided if they could look only to the security for recovery. If payment is not received within 45 days of the due

date, and the mortgagor cannot be reached, you should make a visual inspection to determine whether the property is vacant. If vacant, reasonable action must be taken to protect the property if such action does not constitute illegal trespass.

- Tom Gruber -

FSG NOW OFFERS HOME VALUE EXPLORER

Home Value Explorer is the best choice for your real estate evaluation needs. First Service Group can now provide low-cost, time-saving, and reliable evaluations via the internet.

Home Value Explorer is a new twist on the traditional automated valuation model that helps lending and real estate

professionals expedite business processes, reduce associated costs, and determine residential property valuations to reduce risk. It also streamlines the lending process by cutting days off the collateral assessment cycle while saving hundreds of dollars on each transaction.

Most important, because Home Value Explorer is backed by Freddie Mac, you'll know you are getting information you can trust when processing your real estate applications and loan transactions (home equity, second mortgage, etc).

First Service Group can establish this program for your lend-

ing department. Flexible pricing is available based on volume. For more information on Home Value Explorer, or to see how this program might work for you, please contact us at 1-800-332-0800 or e-mail us at info@fsgdirect.net.



POTPOURRI

Holiday tipping is a reality. Here are some guidelines to use:

- Baby sitter - Two to four nights pay.
- Cleaning person - One to two week's salary.
- Hair stylist - At least the price of one typical appointment
- Garage attendant - Half a month's rent.
- Nanny - One to two weeks salary.
- Mail carrier - May accept gifts of up to \$20 in value.
- Newspaper carrier - \$8 to \$20.
- Personal trainer - Cost of one session.
- Waiter/maitre d' - \$10 to \$50 if dining regularly at the same restaurant.
- UPS/FedEx - \$10 minimum.

- *New Choices* -



COMMUNICATIONS

How many old cellular phones do you have lying around? I have five or six at last count. What do I do with them? Surely someone can use a slightly out-dated or slightly broken wireless device?



Turns out there are thousands

of people and organizations who'd like to help you dispose of your phone. Personally, I'm not keen on the groups that perhaps split the proceeds with a charity 90/10. Guess who keeps the 90? But Verizon has a program called HopeLine that recycles phones to help vic-

tims of domestic violence. If you have a cell phone gathering dust, dig it out and give it to a worthy cause. Try Verizon or call a women's shelter. Maybe the next call from a hand-me-down phone will help save a life.

- *ZDNet* -

QUOTE CORNER

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph."

- *Shirley Temple* -

"Doing little things well is a step towards doing big things better."

- *Harry Banks* -

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared with what lies within us."

- *Oliver Wendell Holmes* -

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US AT.....

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